

T H E
GOLDEN RULE
O F
Divine Philosophy:
With the
DISCOVERY
Of many MISTAKES in the
RELIGIONS
E X T A N T.

Written in Two PARTS.

PART. I. Concerning Divine Philosophy, Proposing and Answering many curious and critical Questions of Scripture very delightful to the curious Reader, and very helpful in many religious Disputes.

PART. II. Concerning the Discovery of many Mistakes upheld in the Religions extant; with an Account how they may be all helped with Safety and Satisfaction, never before so briefly discovered to the World.

By *Robert Kirkpatrick*,
Professor of Physick and Surgery.

L O N D O N :

Printed for the Author, and Sold at his Shop in
Cow-Cross, near Peter-Street. MDCCLXXX.

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Printed for the Author, and Sold at his Shop
in Great Britain, near St. Pauls Church, 1734.



T O

GEORGE II.

King of *Great-Britain*, and the Dominions thereunto belonging.



I T has pleased God of his free Grace, to direct something to a Subject of Thine, whom he has been pleased to account faithful for that Purpose; not for any Worthiness in him, but that it was his holy Will, according to a former Prediction, and my Mission is to direct it to the World, especially to that Part over which God in his Providence has made Thee Governour: Wherefore, according to my Duty, I offer to Thee the first Fruits of these my Labours, which I Dedicate to Thy Protection. Thy poor Subject has done to the utmost his Ability, and no more can be required; wherefore I commit the Rest of what is to be done to Thee, and those Assistants whom Thou art pleased to accept, to do as God shall be pleased to direct You by his Holy Spirit. This is such an

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DEDICATION.

Opportunity as perhaps none of thy Predecessors ever had, it may be because the Almighty has found Thee best qualified for it; and if Thou art pleased to allow it thy favourable Countenance, I doubt not but it will find Acceptance with Thy Council; it is every Man's Business to look to his own Soul's Health, for it is no Man's Business, in such an Affair, to be led by another, since no Man can relieve nor excuse himself, much less another, in Transgression. There is no other Task laid upon Man, than to exert himself according to his Authority and Ability, by all innocent Means, to Correct and Discourage whatsoever is vicious in Life, or not agreeable to the Scriptures in Religion; the first is bad, but the last is the most to be lamented, and Thou acting Thy Part in this, as a good Christian Prince, may'st induce the Almighty to establish an everlasting Crown upon the Head of Thee and thy Posterity, and make Thee, and thy happy Posterity, an everlasting Blessing, not only to these Nations, but to all the Nations and People upon the Earth. That it may please God so to honour Thee, is the hearty Prayer of one

Who is thy Faithful Friend and Subject,

ROBERT KIRKPATRICK.



T H E
P R E F A C E.



*G*OD of his free Grace has been once more pleased to give Warning to an undeserving World by this Present, and if they will choose, or if they refuse, it is left to their own Wills, and he is altogether blameless of their Perdition, if they will take no Warning: but at what Time a Sinner repents of the Evil of his Ways, the Lord is full of Compassion, and ready to forgive what is past, and receive him to Mercy for the Time to come, and even to reward him, as if he had merited by his Repentance, whereas he is still but an unprofitable Servant.

Wherefore, Friendly Reader, look into thy self, for no other can help in this Case, but Christ in thee, the Hope of Glory, to whom apply with all holy Obedience whilst thou hast Opportunity, lest it be hid from thine Eyes, and when it is too late, thou comes to learn what is briefly directed by this little Tract, through the Operation of the Spirit of God, and the Light of the Gospel of Christ, set forth in order to recommend Reason and Truth to the World; those two great and last Witnesses mentioned in the Eleventh of the Revelations, inseparable in themselves, witnessing to each other against an evil World, who
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The P R E F A C E.

was so unapt to receive their Testimony, as barbarously to kill and crucify them, where their Bodies have lain dead and buried, neglected and abused, and triumphed over; but to the Terror of their Adversary are to revive again and stand upon their Feet upon the Earth; which is very likely, by this small Warning. They are also to be received up to their native Heaven, with all those in Company that receiv'd their Testimony, where the Disobedient cannot come; such as Muggleton and Reeves, those two arch Deceivers, who pretended to be those two Witnesses, but brought no Evidence from Reason or Truth to prove it; but if the ingenuous Reader sincerely peruses this, by the Assistance of the same Spirit by which it is writ, he will find these two Witnesses agree together in it, which will clearly demonstrate the Truth of it: But however it be receiv'd, be sure of this, That it is sincerely intended for the Glory of God, and the Good of the World, the Author having no End in View; for being called thereto by the Operations of the Spirit of God for sometime before, he durst not omit it any longer, lest he should have been found guilty of resisting the Holy Ghost. And tho' it may be rejected, cast out and flouted at by many, yet some there be, which will bless God that ever they had the Opportunity of seeing it, who will look upon it as if Providence had only design'd it for them, which is my sincere Advice to all People, lest it should prove their last Opportunity. And that God may be pleased so to incline the Hearts of all People, is the hearty Prayer, and earnest Desire of your Author, who is only yours in the Lord,

R. K.



THE
GOLDEN RULE
OF
Divine Philosophy.

CHAP. I.



WHEN God at first created the Heavens, the Earth and Sea, and all Things contained in them, it pleased him to create the heavenly Beings, a pure aerial Spirit without a Substance, gave them Beings without Want, or Need of any Kind of material Subsistence.

He gave them also a Will, and Ability to exercise their Wills at freedom, only reserving to himself the Reins of Government, that they should not exercise their Wills beyond his Licence.

But some of them growing Vain-glorious of those great and glorious Abilities of Will and Power, and not knowing that it was only a Gift, and limited, began to envy their Creator, or rather his Blessed Son, with whom they thought they could claim Precedence, or at least Equality, vainly conceiting

ceiving that such a mighty fair Angel, as *Lucifer* was, might as well deserve the Title of Son, as he that had it.

Wherefore it pleased the Almighty to let them put their ambitious Imaginations into practice, that by woeful Experience they might clearly apprehend their Mistake.

But others again, more willing to be submissive to their great Creator's Will, considered very reasonably, that suppose possibly they could get the Victory, yet they could not be all made Princes, and Sonship they could not expect by Force.

Therefore, considering that he that made them, was best able to defend them, they opposed the rebellious Angels, and by the Conduct of *Michael*, their Prince, put them to a perpetual Overthrow.

But the terrestrial Beings were not made of such a pure Air as the other, but of Air densified into a tangible Substance, composed of Elements, which were not to continue in Number, as they were created, but to procreate and multiply one of another.

The Earth itself, is of no eternal Substance, neither will it endure to Eternity; but only the grosser Particles of the Air, compacted together by the wise Master-BUILDER, which is capable of Dissolution; for it is composed of four particular Elements, without either of which its Inhabitants could not consist: One of which, namely, Fire, is appointed in due Time to destroy it, and reduce it to its first Nothing, or pure Air again.

In this Earth, there are, in the first Place, generally two Kinds of Inhabitants, vastly different in Nature, which can have no living Conversation one with another; the first inhabiting the Earth, partaking of all the four Elements, the second is in the Water, which has not, nor cannot have any Conversation out of it.

There are also many Creatures that have great Con-

versation both in Earth and Water, and are of a middle Nature, but they are generally ascrib'd to one or t'other; but for the particular Kinds of both, Humanity can no ways account for, there being different Kinds in different Countries, and what is well known in one Country, is unknown in another: The great Creator has reserved the utmost Bounds of that as a Secret to himself, as he has done in all his other Works and Ways, that the most curious Inquisiter, with all his artful inquisition, shall never come to find out the Depth of God's Works to Perfection.

But of all those innumerable Kinds of Creatures, tho' exquisitely curious in themselves, and newly come out of the Hands of their Maker, there was none found on whom God thought fit to ingraft his own Image, until it pleased him to form another Creature, called Man, far different in Protraiture from all his former Creatures.

By reason of which Distinction, and God's own Image, he bears a very perfect Resemblance of all the Rest of the Creation; having something to be found in him, both of Heaven, Earth, and Hell, which was not in his natural Form, until his Transformation after his Fall.

The heavenly Part is his Reason, which no other Creature, besides himself, has any Notion of; by which he is capable to know what is good in the Sight of his Maker, as well as towards himself; and also to project in all Cases concerning his Subjects, which all other earthly Things were made to be.

The earthly Part is the Substance of which he was made, and over which he is to govern, of which he came, and to which he is to return; and in Matters celestial is a great Lett and Cumberance, however truly answerable in itself, for the Purpose his Maker appointed him.

The hellish Part is only casual of himself, thro' the Suggestions of the Prince of the rebellious Angels,

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who envied him with a mortal Malice ; he being a Creature once so far inferiour to himself in his own Opinion, now to be so far before him in Favour.

But the Man himself abusing his own Will to which he was left, gave ear to the Tempter, in breaking the one Command of his God, that was so small, and so easy to be kept : Easy (I say then) because there was at that Time no Corruption in his Nature to incite to Lust ; but would be a Task impossible now in this our fallen Estate.

So that the Body and Mind, with all the Parts and Faculties of both, may truly be said to represent all the rest of the Creation, both humane and divine, and is called *The little World* ; on which I might enlarge much more, but it is needless here, so many having writ to that purpose before.

C H A P. II.

THAT God is, or what he is, or his greatness, is evident by his wonderous Works, both of Creation and Providence, constantly in our View ; we are also daily, hourly, and momentarily partaking of his miraculous Bounty, without which we could not subsist. Blessed be his holy Name, there are very few in these Nations ignorant of it.

But the Way that he has been pleased to communicate his divine nature to Man, is a Truth I desire that the World should plainly understand, and freely receive, which would be full Satisfaction to the unworthy Instrument. And it is this.

When God at first created Man he stamped his own Image upon him ; not that God has any visible Similitude particular, for he is all and every thing himself ; and of him, and to him, and through him are all Things. To whom be Glory, for ever and ever, *Amen.*

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When God at first created the World he had no Substance to make it of; for which he must of necessity make it of his own almighty Power, which is himself. Therefore the World, and all Things therein, and whatsoever it produces, are all real Particles of himself.

It is not to be supposed that God was alone, or with little Company (as some may vainly suppose) before the Creation; for all that ever was made at the Creation, or procreated since, was as much in the View of Omniscience before, as since, and had also a Being in his eternal Intention, excepting what he would not know, for his Justice sake; as shall be shown.

But now to the Purpose: God having implanted in Man a living Soul, which was his own Image; the Produce of that Soul, is Reason, which Faculty may be justly termed, the Communication of God the Father to Man; so that no Man can either abuse or deny his real Reason, but he offers the same Indignity to the first Person in the Trinity.

The second Person is communicated to Man by Promise, which is Christ, the eternal Son of God, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Now since there is no Way to the first Person, but by, and thro' the second, then wheresoever we deviate from the Truth we are out of the Way of Reason. There is no dividing of these two, any more than there is of the first and second Person of the Trinity, which are both one; for Reason is Truth, and Truth is Reason; the two last great *Witnesses* mention'd, *Rev. xi.*

It is allowable by all, that this Reason was the Image that God was pleased to imprint upon Man, no other Creature partaking of that excellent Faculty, but Man alone; and without Reason there can be no Comprehension of Truth, and without a right Comprehension of Reason and Truth, we can have no Communication with the Spirit of God, which is the third Person.

This Image, thus describ'd, did not only fit us for Government, but was to us also instead of a Law; and a sufficient one it was before the Deprivation of our Estate in the Fall, which so far defaced that Image in us, as to make the most of us, thro' the evil Inclinations ingrafted in us, to neglect it, or rather to reverse it; turning Reason into Injustice and Oppression, and Truth into Falshood, Prevarication, and Dissimulation.

For the *Law of Reason* (commonly called the *Law of Nature*) is the Law of all Laws, in which all good Order consists; it is a direct Rule (by some called the *Golden Rule*) whereby all Men ought to square their Lives and Actions: To do as they would be done by, is the Purport of the whole, and answers very well to both first and second Tables of the Law, which Tables are only a Repetition of that first Law of Reason by Particulars, since our Deprivation, because of the dulness of our depraved Apprehension, and our own evil Inclinations.

For what is more reasonable than to adore the God that made us, and by whom we have our Being: would not a Master be ador'd of his Household, even suppose it was not in his Power to give them either Life or Being? and since you would be belov'd of your Servants, that have no more of you than what they earn; why then should not you love your God that gives you all Things richly to enjoy? and in so doing you only do as you would be done by.

God has said, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before him*: How unreasonable is it to Worship any Thing besides him then? Whatsoever it be, it is but a Piece of the same Creation with themselves. How wouldest thou take it if thou hadst made any Thing for thy own Use, and it should refuse to serve thee, but should very readily and willingly serve some Thing else, to which it owed no Obedience? By the same Rule, do thou only serve that God whose handy Work thou

art,

art, least thou be done by as thou thyself wouldest do in such a Case.

The second Commandment is only a Discovery of the Particulars prohibited in the first, with an Account of God's Love and Care for those who love and obey him, and his Abhorrence, Detestation, and Punishment of the Disobedient, and their Posterity, which is most Just, and nothing more reasonable.

The third Commandment forbids us *to take his holy Name in vain*. What more unreasonable than to abuse either Name, or Title, or any Thing pertaining to that Being from whom we have our Being, and all Things else that we enjoy?

The fourth Commandment is *to remember the Sabbath Day*, with all the reasonable Duties discovered in the same; which seems, by the first Word, to call to remembrance some Thing that had been forgot, which of all outward Ceremonies that ever were commanded, we had most Reason to remember. *First*, by the Example of our great Creator, who first dignified it upon the finishing of that great Work of Creation.

Secondly, For the great Benefit it is to us in resting from our Labour, which Nature reasonably requires. *Thirdly*, the Opportunity we have of worshipping and adoring our great Creator on that Day, which our worldly Employments, about the Affairs of this Life, diverts us from, on other Days, and which, if our Reason (or the Image of God in us) had not been wonderfully clouded by the Fall, had been sufficient to have taught us such a necessary Duty, without any other Command for it, which altogether is but doing as you would be done by, if you were in God's stead. But no Rule is to be found for the Altering of it, for when Christ foretold the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, which was forty Years after, he spoke of the Sabbath Day.

Now

Now, Reader, consider what any one Thing is contain'd in all the six Commands of the second Table, that thou wouldest not thy Neighbour would do by thee. By the same Reason do thou so by him, and by that Rule thou shalt fully obey the whole Law, betwixt Man and Man, to a Tittle; which is no more than barely reasonable.

Now, Reader, thou seest what an easy Task was laid upon us, and how reasonable, at our first Creation, and how that all that ever has been said or done since was only to fulfil that easy Task. What a Dash then has the Fall of Man given to that pure and perfect Creation of God, so that all the particular Commands, all the Injunctions of legal Ceremonies, the Coming and Sufferings of Christ, were all occasioned by it; when otherwise the Image of God at first impress'd upon Man was sufficient for all.

C H A P. III.

NOW Man having abused his own Will, and by the Subtilty of the Prince of Darknes having taken part against his Maker on the Rebel's Side, and made his Condition as bad as theirs in itself, could no more help himself out of it than they could do, but lay then wholly bound over to eternal Destruction. You must think the evil one gloried no little of his Victory, and that he had brought that late Favorite as far out of Favour as himself: He thought himself a little reveng'd for his Loss.

But it being foreseen of God, that Man would abuse his Will, more thro' the Simplicity of the Matter he was made of, and the Persuasions of the more crafty one, than any conceived Malice in himself against his God, with whom he had so little Conversation;

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But God was pleas'd to take Pity on him, and offer him that Remedy which from all Eternity he had provided; which God was graciously pleas'd to give by a firm Promise, even beyond all Thought or Expectation of Men or Angels; that whosoever faithfully believed the Promise, had the Image of God renew'd in him, as if he never had lost it; Infirmities only excepted, which are not imputed to the faithful Penitents.

For altho' the Promise was not immediately fulfil'd, but was for some Time to come, yet the Faithful had no Loss by that, for they had the same Benefit by the Merits of Christ, before his coming, as since, and there was no Salvation but in Christ, neither before nor after his coming.

Some People are apt to think that God has dealt hardly by them, in not creating them Angels, in which Estate they had been free from the Cares and Troubles of this Life, which are so intolerable to endure, and from which the Angels are altogether free; but they little consider the great Benefit they have by the Merits of Christ, and his free purchased and offered Redemption, which, you will say, the Angels have no need of.

But had'st thou been created an Angel, and also happen'd to have been one of those that fell, there had been no Redemption for thee; nor Hopes of any, which now there are. You will say, that all Men have not benefited by Christ's Death. I answer, it is their own Fault; for Christ died for all Men that ever came into the World, and had the fallen Angels such an Offer, I do believe not one of them would miss of it, or set so light by it as most Men do.

It is to be supposed, that they who are so rebellious now, in this Estate, wherein they are so well apprised of their Danger, by the Example of all others, an Opportunity which the Angels wanted, would have been as forward to Rebellion as the rest: Or what should

should have hinder'd them then, that will not be persuaded to the contrary now ?

But, say they, we are safe enough, for that great Remedy has justified us all by Faith in him. It is a good Argument and a true one. But have you Faith in him? Yes, say they, we hope so; but the Hopes of the Hypocrite shall perish, you must be sure of that: *The Tree is known by its Fruit, and that Tree that bears not good Fruit is hewn down and cast into the Fire;* and the Fruit of Justification is Justice. So look back, and look into thyself, and if thou can'st not find the Fruit, be sure for all thy Hopes thou hast no Part nor Share in the Root.

For if thou be unjust, thou shalt not *inherit the Kingdom of Heaven*; if thou art a Liar, then thou art *a Child of the Devil*, and can'st not have any Faith in Christ, except it be such Faith as Devils have which believe and tremble. So then, since by the Fruits of Justice we come to know ourselves to be of that justified Party, let us no more deceive ourselves with vain Hopes, but immediatly apply ourselves to do in all Cases, as we would be done by, which is in itself nothing more than really reasonable.

I do not say, that a justified Person is altogether without Fault, altho' he ought to be so; but he is such an one as allows himself in none; but wheresoever he has in any ways transgressed, he immediatly flies to the Remedy, Christ Jesus; and if any one has been a Sufferer by his Default, he immediatly makes them amends, begging Pardon of God and Man for his Sin and Trespas, and puts no Confidence in vain Hopes; all which is but reasonable, since it is so required of his God, and he himself also would, that others should do so by him.

There is great Difference between a justified Person, and one that is not; the former watches so carefully over his Ways, that he never makes a Slip in any respect, but he immediatly flies to his Advocate and
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laments it, and guards against it for the Future, and immediately flies to his Advocate with the Father, and amends to the utmost of his Power; but the latter rather values himself the more, for what Mischief and Wrong he can any ways accomplish, boasting of it, and repeating it again, if it lies in his Power, without any amends on his Part, but what the Law obliges him to; for which Satisfaction he has no Thanks of God or Man, since he did no more than he was forc'd to, like another unreasonable brute Beast, that never had that Image imprinted upon him, by which you may reasonably guess, what Store of a justifying Faith such a one can pretend to; besides, Christ is no Advocate for such.

Now, Reader, here is no Medium, for if thou dost not employ thy Reason, so as to be both Just and True, thro' a real Love and Respect to Christ, thou hast no Faith at all to justify thee, and if thou pretend to it, thou only hoodwinkest thyself to thy own Perdition; and as sure as ever thou wast born, shalt have thy Portion with the Hypocrites. For this is a Truth that no one professing Christianity, can or dare deny, let them be of what Denomination soever.

And let them do what they can, or what they will, it will avail them nothing. Let them do all the Duties that ever they knew, or all that ever they were taught to do, and say all the Prayers that ever were either printed, or invented, it is to no Purpose, if they neglect *Reason* and *Truth*, which include the whole of thy Duty to God and Man, only in a Word, *to do as thou wouldest be done by*. For free Grace is only extended to the Upright in Heart.

I do not mean such a Reason, or rather the quite contrary, as is too generally called so, by such who count every Thing unreasonable that is against themselves, without any Consideration of Equity, more than the natural Brutes, that know no more of Reason than Self; but such a pure Reason as indifferently looks upon all alike, without respect of Per-

sons, for respect of Persons blinds Reason; and if thou respectest thyself, thou can'st never comprehend Reason.

Therefore it is no such self-misplac'd, misconstrued Conceit, as Self-Lovers call Reason, but the pure Image of God, which is a Rule and a Guide to all the other Faculties of the Soul. How many Ways and Opinions are there, and what Animosities about them, and every one pleads Conscience, but it is a great Mistake; for it is not God's Recorder in them that leads them into those Distractions, but themselves by the Abuse of their Reason; and Conscience only records all according to his Office, and cannot help bearing the Blame of their wilfull Errors: But when a Day of reckoning comes, he will show, by his Records, who is to blame.

Reason is also the true Rule for all our other Behaviours; for wert thou a Prince or Ruler, thou wouldest be obey'd; by the same Reason obey thou thy Rulers. Wert thou a Magistrate, thou wouldest be regarded; for the same Reason regard thou those that are in Authority over thee. Wert thou a Begger, thou wouldest willingly be relieved; by the same Reason relieve thou the Beggars. Wert thou a Dealer, would'st thou not be dealt justly with by thy Dealers? For the same Reason deal thou justly by thy Dealers.

C H A P. IV.

IT is generally said, and also believed, that Reason is only a Handmaid to Faith; but Reason can no ways agree to that, because Faith was never either required or expected, but where there was Revelation, with full Assurance that the Revealer was the Spirit of God. And then what is more reasonable than to obey the positive Commands of that God that made us? For God deals so reasonably with his Creatures, that where nothing is given, nothing is required;

quired; but counts Obedience an Improvement of the Gift, for which he freely rewards, as if we had merited.

Abraham is commended, and recorded to all Generations, for his great Faith in offering up his only Son *Isaac*, when he only obeyed a positive and particular Command of God, which in all Reason he durst not disobey, knowing God's almighty Power to punish him if he disobey'd; so that *Abraham* merited nothing (as many vainly imagine) but it was only God's free Grace, rewarding his Obedience, and esteeming it for Faith; and so it was; tho' nothing be more reasonable than perfect Obedience, as well in that as in all other Cases; for if the Image of God in us, had not been defaced by the Fall, there had been no Place found for that Grace of Faith, nor any of the other Graces; but Reason alone, accompany'd with Truth, had then reign'd all in all, without Interruption; the Holy Spirit being the Hand by which they should act, the Faculty proceeding from both, and all three one.

Now, in asserting such Things as Reason will not allow, take heed thou be not found a Lier, and God reprove thee; for as Truth is the native Child of God, so Liers are the adopted Children of the Devil; for he was a Lier from the Beginning, and the Father of such: a Lier is not only the real Child of the Devil, but more, Lying is a very Mother, and almost a perfect Nurse to all other Vices, Frauds, and Deceits in the World for the general Part; care not what Wickedness they commit, so they have a Lie ready to excuse it with; whereas, on the other hand, the Children of God make it their constant Study to do nothing worthy of Rebuke, least thereby they should be induced also to forsake the blessed Truth, and betake themselves to the Father of Lies for a Protection; but there are but very few of that Sort, the more it is to be lamented. And if thou art Proud thou art cursed before hand. C 2 Then,

Then, seeing Lies are of such a dangerous Quality, how circumspect ought all People to be in guarding against them, but more especially in all Cases of Religion, to assert or introduce any Thing but what the Scripture is very clear in, and divine Reason also approves; for consider right and thou mightest easily say, *Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way to Life, and few there be that find it.* Since no Lier shall inherit eternal Life, see if thou knowest one in all thy Knowledge, that is not less or more tainted with that universal and destructive Vice.

How confidently will some affirm, that the Souls of Men were not created within the Compass of the six Days; because, say they, where is the Place of their Abode? Do such think there is not room enough in the vast Abyss of boundless Eternity, and Mansions enough in God's great House, as well for them as for others of God's Creatures of like Sort; but for any Account from the Truth, we have no more than that God created all Things in the Space of six Days; for which Reason we ought not to dispute it.

But some think it strange, that if they had a Being since the Creation, why they do not remember any Thing of it when they come to this World; but is it not as strange, that all Men having a spiritual Body, which is to be raised instead of this mortal Body, and which could no more come by Procreation than the Soul could do; that that spiritual Body should be so feeble, and useless in all Respects, when it comes to the World, as we see it is? Now it appears to be reasonable that assuming this mortal or earthly Body, which tho' so curiously composed, yet is so gross in comparison of the spiritual Parts, that it clogs them up, and makes them incapable of retaining any Thing of their former Understanding; therefore they know no more here than what they learn here: Or whether they will know any Thing by Remembrance in the Life to come of what was transacted here,

here, is what no Man can be accountable for, more than what Conscience records; for that Passage concerning *Dives* and *Lazarus* was but a Parable.

Some again think, and several Parts of Scripture seem to countenance it, that there is a general and particular Election predestinating to eternal Life from all Eternity, which does not at all consist with Reason; because the contrary Party must, by the same Reason if it could be called so, be predestinated to Damnation; which cannot consist with either Justice, or Reason, or Mercy; and if they can prove the contrary, in a just and merciful God, then they may make good their Assertion, but not before; for God is not so partial as to create any Thing to eternal Torment, for that would be the Height of all Cruelty, which is absurd to alledge.

But they will say again, was God ignorant of what would become of each of his Creatures, whereas he knows every secret Thought? But as Partiality in such a powerful Being would appear as bad as Ignorance, or rather much worse; it is very absurd to ascribe either to him; wherefore such Scrutineers must consider of a Medium, and that which seems most reasonable in our Apprehension is, that God who was pleased to allow to Man a Will and Ability to exercise it, to clear himself of all blame of Man's Miscarriage, might be pleased to eclipse his Fore-Knowledge of particular Men's future Estate. So that he did not know it, because he would not know it; otherwise Fore-Knowledge in an Almighty Power had been the same with Fore-Ordination.

For consider this, if all Things were fore-ordain'd that come to pass, what Reward does the Righteous deserve, or what Punishment does the Wicked deserve, since neither could do otherwise than they did, by an eternal Decree; then where was the Desert of the one, or Fault of the other? If Believers are saved by eternal Election, and the Unbelievers damned by the same,

same, who was it that Christ died for, since they were both in a fixed State before? It is impossible for such Doctrine to be right, since no Reason can allow it, and the Doctrine of the Gospel is render'd useless by it, and to be nothing but a fictitious Imposition, and the Son of God but an Impostor.

What an unreasonable Thing would it be, even in a Man, to require Labour of one that he himself had bound Hand and Foot? But suppose such Madness might possess a Man, thro' Infirmary, yet who dare impute such high Injustice to a just God, who is quite the contrary in his own Nature, and so mortally hates all who are so disposed? How absurd to say, that God would give a Law without any Ability to obey it! that he would say, chuse or refuse, when he knew they could do nothing of themselves, being chain'd up by a perpetual Decree.

An eternal Election is granted, otherwise our Faith were vain; but it is only in Jesus Christ, the second Person in the Trinity, the Word of Truth, in whom whosoever believes is also elected, if they also be obedient in Love to him; which is easily discovered, for whosoever loves him *keeps his Commandments*; so that whosoever is thus obedient is sure of his Election, and not else; yet as all Men have, or had, the same Opportunity, no Man is necessarily excluded; else God could not be just, nor the Scripture true that reports it so.

Now some People constantly affirm, that all Things must be as God pleases; which is true in the Main, because it is in his Power to hinder it; but it is not in his Will, because he has, in great Measure, given that away to his Creatures, only when it touches his own Honour in some high Degree, because he is jealous of his Honour; therefore it is not his Pleasure that any one should dishonour him in any Ways, nor yet defraud one another; and whatsoever is contrary to his holy Law is highly displeasing to him.

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If all Things were done by his good Pleasure, than all manner of Impiety must be included, which the pure Nature of God so abhors, that it is great Impiety so much as to think so; for suppose the Wicked *is as a Sword in his Hand to punish the Wicked*, and it may please him to suffer *the Potsberds of the Earth to clash against others*, yet the Act is no more approved of God, for it is but the Effects of their unruly Tempers, and the Abuse of their own Wills; and suppose the Righteous be often punished by them, it is either to keep them more close to their Duty, or bring them to Repentance for some Slips they have made therein; and since as it is a Rod it has answer'd the End, that it did not intend; yet at last it shall be thrown into the Fire for its Pains.

The Ways of God are past finding out, therefore Humanity can no Ways account for them, they being all too full of Mystery; but the Sun, Moon, and Stars have great Influence on all Things terrestrial, and upon the Bodies of Men, as to all their natural Parts and Qualities, which are committed to the Agency of those Constellations; as also the Creature itself having a Share in that Agency, works that wonderful amazing Work of Figures, Features, and Distinctions, which is beyond Conceit of all Men and Angels to comprehend; which those Constellations naturally work, yet being inanimate they know not what they do. So that God, by his Providence, has set them all a Work, for he made nothing altogether useless, tho' he is accountable to none for any of his Works.

C H A P. V.

THE *Apostle's Creed* says, that *our Saviour Christ descended into Hell*, which some seem to deny; I do not know what Reason they have for it, if they believe

believe the Apostles, or if they believe that it was the Apostles that compos'd it : I cannot, indeed, tell where they found it recorded, since the direct Copy is not to be found in holy Writ, except they apply to every Man's breast that is a Christian ; for it is the very Basis and most lively Expression of our Christian Faith, and generally believed of all that profess Christ's Name every where, and very well deserves to be so.

But why they shou'd make any Obstacle at that Word more than the rest, I cannot think. He had no Reason to be afraid of it, as to the Torments, he being himself supream Lord even of Torment itself ; besides there was nothing in him for Torment to work upon, where, say such Doctors, went his Spirit when his Body was found Dead upon the Cross ? It did not go to Heaven, because he charged *Mary* not to touch him, for as yet he was not ascended to the Father.

Besides, *Peter* says, that *by the Spirit he went and preached to the Spirits in Prison, which sometime were disobedient in the Days of Noah*, which was not to fetch out the Souls of the holy Fathers, as some say, for they were not there ; besides, the Words plainly say, that those he preached to were the disobedient Spirits of those that were bound in Prison for their former disobedience.

And what was the Sermon, do you think, he preached to them ? It was no comfortable one you may be sure ; but to shew them, by dire Experience, their eternal Loss by their Disobedience, and also what Advantage others had obtained by their obedience ; and as his purchased Redemption crowned the Happiness of the Obédient, even so it confirmed the unremediable Destruction of the Disobedient ; and as his Appearance to the Faithful was an Augmentation to their everlasting Comfort, so on the contrary it was an Augmentation of the eternal Pain of the Wicked.

Now I refer it to thee, Reader, whatever thou be, whether thou thinkest that those Apostles did not know the Mind of Christ better than those Controulers,
who

who pretend to deny this reasonable and no wise absurd Assertion; besides it is true as well as reasonable.

Can any one think that his Spirit lay dormant in his Body the Time that his Body lay in the Tomb? it does not look reasonable: Besides, I think, upon a second Consideration, no one believes it. And since that disobedient Prince's Power is in the Air, consequently his Dominion must be there also; then, by the same Argument, his Dominion is in Hell, and Hell is in the Air; and since the airy Region surrounds the whole terrestrial Globe, and Heaven being outward, and circling both, then Reason will allow that there is no Way to Heaven, but thro' Hell; however Hell can hurt none but who are real Subjects of that Dominion.

I hope no one is so stupid as to believe, that our Saviour Christ was any whit afraid that he should not get out again; he had no Sin to be afraid of to keep him there; besides the Residence of three of his Attributes is chiefly there; that is, Justice, Judgment, and Vengeance; besides the Devils themselves are his own handy Work, and made of himself at first, as all other Things be. Doubtless it was a great Addition to the Damned's Affliction to see him there, but it was for that he appear'd there; even as to bring Joy to the Righteous he appear'd upon Earth.

It is alledged by some, that Christ's natural Body is now in Heaven, Flesh, Blood, and Bones, as he was born of the Virgin *Mary*, because the Apostles saw him ascend to the Clouds in that same Body; but it is very unreasonable that all others should have their earthly Bodies changed into spiritual Bodies, and he only, who is the Author of that Change, should retain a Body of Earth to himself only. He has said, by his Spirit, *that Flesh nor Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.*

But, say they, his Body was not to see Corruption; besides, his Apostles saw him pass quite out of their Sight in that very Body of Flesh, and Blood, in

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which

which he did reside here, and in which he suffer'd. All this is true, and we all believe it; but as it was Flesh and Blood, it did not enter into Heaven in that real Substance, but was changed in that Region of Fire which changes all Things in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye; and since Truth directs it, and Reason approves it, it is our Duty to believe it.

It is also generally believed, that our Bodies decay into Dust, and that that Dust remains till Judgment, which revives and grows into a natural Body again, and every Bone joyns to his Fellow, as when they departed this Life, which is a great Mistake. Oh, but say they, it is in God's Power to do it even in a Moment; but we know by Experience it is not his Way; for he could have created the Universe in a Moment, yet he took six Days to it, and as if it had been a painful Work to him, it is said, *he rested the seventh Day*. It would be very wonderful for what Use God should create such innumerable Multitudes as the whole Earth could not contain, and also of fresh Earth, since we see, by Experience, that the Old is already quite gone to nothing, which would be a Creation little inferiour to the first; and then to consume all together by Fire, in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, would be useless Work; for none that believes in him distrusts his All-sufficiency, and God makes nothing in vain. Besides, what Reason can there be for it, when there is no Truth to support it, but the quite contrary? as in *1 Cor. xv. 44*. But when should this be, whether before the Conflagration or after? if before, they are immediatly to be consumed, but if they say after, then there is nothing to make them of, all being consum'd in the Conflagration.

For if there were the least Dust remaining of every one, where there are such innumerable Multitudes buried, it would amount to some Bulk at last; but it is quite otherwise, for we see, by Experience, that
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the most antient and most frequented Burying-Places, are no whit higher than the other Ground, except it be caused by the Tombstones, or some other combustible Matter, for Corps and Coffins go all into Anihilation.

For suppose it is said, that Man was *formed of the Dust of the Earth*, which is true, because the Earth was created first; but was not the Earth itself made of nothing? For example, if thou take the Seed of a Man, of which Man is procreated, and reduce it to Dust by calcination, by the most subtle Degree possible, and then see what Store of Dust you will have, or whether you will have any or not; but true it is you will have none. Now Man being the little World, and a real Emblem of the great Universe; by his Example shall all lose every Particle of its terrestrial Substance.

Now we have an Account both of Creation and Procreation, which seems very amazing to our understanding, and if a God that cannot Lie had not declared it, would seem very incredible; for Man being first created, without a Help-Mate to Appearance, it pleased God to make his Wonders manifest, to make him a Help-Mate, even of himself; which causes the Curious to question, whether a Woman hath a Soul or not; but such Inquisiters might have taken the same Answer to themselves, which our Saviour made to the *Sadducees, that they neither knew the Scriptures nor the Power of God*. From which Argument it is plain, that as there is no Distinction of Sexes amongst the Angels, neither shall there be any amongst the glorified Saints; but it is most likely, that as they were first created one, and afterwards separated, that at the Resurrection they shall be united again, no more to be separated, which is as possible with God as the other.

Yet a Woman hath nothing to Boast the more for that as if she had nothing to answer for, being she is

not to answer for herself; but if it were so, she has Reason to lament, that she is so little better than a Beast here, and not capable of enjoying Happiness hereafter. But these are all but false Conjectures, for as it was not the hundredth Part of the Man that she was made of at first, so she is, and ought to esteem herself by so much the weaker Vessel, and not dare to presume Equality with, much less usurp Authority over the Man. However, many Women are more masculine than others, yea even then some feminine Men, nevertheless they ought to be esteemed each in their own Place, because such Alterations are only caused by the Influence of the Constellations. But, however, the major Part minds no such Qualifications, but glories in the contrary, yet the better Part are otherwise minded, knowing that to usurp Authority over their Husbands is perfect Rebellion, which is an Iniquity God will not leave unpunished.

So it is also imagin'd by most People, that there will be a living Body, and a living Soul, of one and the same Person; and to confirm the Matter, they tell you what Dialogues will pass between them in the Way of either, bemoaning their Miseries, and blaming one another, or rejoicing in their Happiness, and commending one another; and even tell it, yea Word for Word, as firmly as if they had heard it with their own Ears. But what Account such Fiction-Mongers will give of their mistaken Notions, and especially when their learned Mistakes are made fully evident, it is hard to account for; or who they think will reward them for such pernicious Labour, where there is neither Truth to vindicate it, nor Reason to alledge for it.

For when God made Man at first, we do not read that he made him a living Body, besides, real Experience shows us the contrary; for the Corpse of a Man neither hath, nor had in it any Life or Spirit, till it pleased God to breath in Man the Spirit of Life,
and

and *Man became a living Soul*; as the Word of Truth says, that at the *Resurrection these natural Bodies shall be raised up spiritual Bodies*; but in the same Place it says nothing of uniting with a Soul, or any other second, but Christ Jesus, as the head of an incorporeal Body; but for a spiritual Soul, and a spiritual Body, both having Life and Motions, and each capable of Disputation a part, or each with other; and to be united into one again, is contrary to all Reason, and that he should have two living Spirits, at the Resurrection, God giving him but one at the Creation.

But if he was called in question which way he came by the other, I think his Answer would be, he found it in his Priest's Brains, which doubtless would be honestly enough, as to his Part, if it would but pass so; for it would be a more likely Excuse than to say, it was lying in the Grave all the while, which hath no Power to contain a living Spirit; and it is contrary to Reason, that a Spirit is any ways capable either of Mortification or Corruption.

The Prophet *Samuel* was not buried at *Endor*, neither was *Endor* in Heaven, that *Samuel's* Spirit should so readily appear there at that Time; but how confidently do Preachers affirm, that it was the Devil that appear'd to *Saul*, even contrary to the Spirit of God, that tells us, that it was the Spirit of *Samuel*. How contradictory they are to the Spirit of God pray consider, as if they knew better; but it shows, that the Spirits of good Men deceased are confined no where; neither did *Samuel* come of himself, but God was pleased to send him, at that King's wicked unlawful Request, to satisfy his Curiosity, little to his Satisfaction. But it appears to me, that neither the Good nor the Bad are in a perfect fixed State, until the great Day of Account, or Resurrection, wherein all Men, and their Actions, shall arise and appear in that Day, and come to light, which were dead, buried, and forgotten, as to Man, many Years before; but not arising
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out of the Ground, for at that Time, the Heavens, and the Earth, and all material Substances, will be reduced to nothing by the general Conflagration.

But for every one particular Person to have a spiritual Body, also a Soul of the same Substance, and the two to be hammer'd into one, is both Superfluous and Ridiculous; for suppose it is sufficiently in the Power of God, yet the Truth gives us no light into it, for God does nothing, as towards Man, but what he has made known by his Word of Truth.

Now here is Truth agreeing with Reason, and no former Discovery to contradict it, which may reasonably be supposed then, to be directed by the Spirit of God. For if Christ be *the first Fruits of the Resurrection*; so he must consequently be the first in the Conflagration, since the one cannot be without the other; so that Christ appears in no other Similitude, now in Heaven, than he did before he came to the Earth. Therefore Christ's Resurrection being already past, and the Conflagration having acted its Part upon his Body, as it shall upon all Bodies, he is now in his fixed State, and Judgment has no more to do with him; he has no Corruption of Nature, nor Defects in his Behaviour, to rise in Judgment against him; wherefore he is appointed Lord Chief Justice, and a most righteous Chancellor, to define in all Causes as the true Recorder Conscience shall make his Reports.

As to the Place of present abode of the Souls of Men, till the general Judgment, it is not discovered by the Truth where it is; but it is not all in one Place; for *the Wicked shall not appear in the Assembly of the Righteous*; also every one partly knows what their State shall be after Judgment, for if Men's State were fixt before, and their Doom intail'd upon them to all Eternity, a general Judgment would be but a very Complement, even such a one as an omnipotent God would never pass upon his Creatures so far inferiour to himself.

Some

Some do imagine, that there is a Place of Purgation, where Men, by suffering, may pay the utmost Farthing of all that ever they have gone in Score with God's Justice; but that Notion was only raised by such as disdain'd Christ to that Degree, as that they would rather pay their Debt at the highest Rate themselves, than in any ways to be beholden to Christ to pay it for them; and to cloak their Hatred, have quite cast off that Image of the first Person, which is Reason, that they may the more tolerably abuse and degrade the Second, and quite deny the Third, with all his Operations, any more than a bare Mention of his Name sometimes, or by some imaginary false Miracle alledg'd by his Operation to delude the Simple.

So that in all their Actions, as to Religion, they are agreeable in nothing; for if in any Thing they seem to make use of Reason, in that same Thing they deviate from the Truth as far as possible, and whereinsoever they lay hold on a Word of Truth seemingly, it is in such a Manner as quite casts off all Reason, so that I never find Truth and Reason to accord in any of those People; so that it is plain if there were ever so little more Money to be had, by denying of the Being of a God altogether, they surely would own none; for whosoever denies right Reason can be no Friend to Truth, and whosoever denies the Truth abuses Reason, for there is no separating of these two, nor a true Knowledge of the one, but by the other, and who denies them denies God.



PART II.

Concerning the Discovery of many Mistakes upheld in the Religions extant ; with an Account how they may be all helped with Saftety and Satisfaction, never before so briefly discover'd to the World.

CHAP. I.



HAVING ended my first Part, with a Hint upon the superstitious Purgatory-Mongers, that are so ambitious of paying their own Debt, and yet pretend an Obligation to Christ, but cannot tell for what, since by their Belief the antient Fathers went to Purgatory, and that they that die under the Gospel Dispensation go to Purgatory also ; they have made the Coming of Christ but a mere Compliment, since he did nothing for his Coming, and since Men believe they can, and pay their own Debt to God's Justice, then what Thanks can they pretend to owe to any one for paying for them.

But these are they of whom the Apostle spoke, who crept in amongst them to spy out their Liberty,

ty, which when they had done their next Study was to destroy it, which they too soon effected, and brought them into greater Thralldom and Bondage than ever either *Jews* or *Pagans* were in; so that all the Superstitions, that ever they pleased to foyster in, must directly be obey'd of all Men, or otherwise no less Punishment than the most cruel Death, that Cruelty itself could invent, which was burning alive was inflicted; a Thing most hateful even to the most barbarous Nation, tho' Christ's Directions were quite the contrary.

But they being Haters of Christ naturally, and only crept in as aforesaid, they made it their whole Business to destroy his Interest, and, as far as possible, all that ever inclin'd to Maintain it; and being *Wolves in Sheeps Cloathing*, they were not discern'd of the unthinking innocent Lambs, untill they begun to devour them, and then it was much too late. However, as Christ's *Kingdom was not of this World*, and no Conquest to be gain'd by fighting, but by suffering, the true Christians could be at no great Loss, since the Conquest was to be gain'd that Way, whosoever they suffer'd by, 2 *Tim.* iii. 12. *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer Persecution*; but the Enemies since they could not prevail by Force, rather than miss their End, usurp'd to themselves the Name of *Christian*, in order to effect it that Way; for those that account themselves the most godly, are always persecuting others, less or more, as Opportunity offers; altho' the Apostle lays that Necessity upon themselves, so far from being Persecutors, that they must suffer at the Hands of others if they be godly, or belong at all to Christ, as before.

Well, and that Stratagem took, whereby they subtilly undermined the whole Flock of Christ unawares, and having the carnal Sword in their Hand, and pretending to fight for Christ, a Discipline he never would allow of, they fought directly against him, and so prevail'd, and they gain'd more ground upon the

true Flock, than ever they could do by all their Heathen Persecutions, even to the very Extirpation of the whole Sect (except the hidden ones, such as those that were in *Elias's* Time, when he thought there had not been one left but himself, tho' there were seven thousand in *Israel* of his own Profession, which God only knew) for those Names of Adversaries were only changed, not their Natures.

Then having so far obtained their End, they raged and ravaged the World at their will, worse than ever they did when they went by their true Name of *Heathens*, and having abandon'd the first Person before, and now got such a firm Conquest over the second, they thought then there was none to come between them, and the whole Inheritance; and so only by making Use of the bare Name, they made themselves Lords of the whole Earth, having, by Usurpation, made sure of all as they thought.

But as no worldly Felicity is altogether without some Interruption, neither was this Usurper; for since he, by his Policy, had obtain'd that Conquest that all his Persecutions could not do; it pleased God to cut his Power a little short: for another Usurper as bad as himself, envying his Greatness and Power, which was *Mahomet*, set himself up in Opposition to the former, and so they employ'd their carnal Swords, one against the other; however, betwixt them, they altogether rooted out Christ's visible Inheritance; for they being, tho' different in their Sentiments as to one another, and both alike ambitious of Government, yet prov'd to be of such equal Force, that the one could not extinguish the other; yet they did not fail in their grand Enterprize against Christ: so these two reign'd sole Monarchs upon the Earth, tho' Antagonists to each other.

So that the distressed Church of Christ, that Inheritance which he had purchased at so dear a Rate, was forced to fly to the Wilderness, there to be fed of
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However, by the divine Providence of God, the Gospel-Day began to dawn again, and many People began to peep out; and not knowing at first what to think, yet beholding something more desirable and delectable than that which they had been train'd up in, embrac'd it; tho' they had but bare glimmerings at first: for darkness had so obscur'd Gospel Light, that they had not only corrupted it by Piece-Meal, and turned all the plain and lively Expressions of it into mysterious Meanings, and false Interpretations; but they had even turned it headlong out of doors, to go and take up its Lodging with its Master, if it would, for they would entertain it no longer, for they then had made the best of it, and gotten all they looked for by it; but they were mistaken, for it was supported by a higher Hand than to be turned out of doors at their Pleasure; and when they saw themselves frustrated in all their wicked Purposes against it, then they began to be afraid of it, that when it could do them no more Good, it might probably do them Hurt: for as they had found in it the Occasion to advance themselves to such a high Pitch, they were afraid that some or other would find enough in it whereby to pull

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them down again; and as they had gotten the Son's Inheritance by Fraud and Usurpation, if they could have got fairly shut of his Gospel, they fear'd not keeping of it out for ever; but there began the Tragedy, for when they would have thrust that quite out by which they thrust themselves so in;

Then God arose, as a Giant that is awaked out of his Wine, and roar'd even among the thick of his Enemies by his worthy *Boanergesses*, Sons of Thunder, who spared not their own Lives, but gave them up to the Death for the Vindication of the Truths of Christ's glorious Gospel, as far as they were then enlightened, and that was all that was required; *for Obedience is better than Sacrifice, and if a Cup of cold Water, in the Name of Christ, goes not unrewarded*; there is no doubt of their Reward who have suffer'd the hot scorching Flames of a consuming Fire for his Names sake, so that it was in Charity.

However these hidden ones had been so long in the Wilderness, until they were become very much bewilder'd themselves, for want of the real Presence of their *Moses* to lead and guide them; for when *Moses* was but forty Days in the Mount with God, the best amongst the Multitude corrupted their ways by Idolatry, even *Aaron* the high Priest of God was not quite out of that Transgression; so that *John Huss* also, the greatest Stickler in those Times for the Gospel of Christ against the Enemy, had never altogether declined from saying Mass himself; so far was he bewilder'd in those obscure Times.

And not only he, but there was not any for many hundred Years that escaped so clean, but what was less or more bespatter'd with that kind of Dirt; for they had heaped their Slough so full with all manner of Superstitions, that it was altogether impossible, except with God, to make a clean Escape at the first: however, some got their Heads out, others got out Head and Shoulders (so to term it) and some got out

to Knee deep, but all stuck less or more in the Mud of Superstition; however, in all Times of Ignorance, God winked at, so that whosoever walked up to what they knew, with all Humility and Sincerity, they did not go unrewarded, altho' it was no Merit.

But the envious Enemy of Mankind, who still goes about like a roaring Lion seeking, whom he may devour, workt it so about, that where they stuck at the first flight from darkness, there they stick still; and let the Light shine ever so bright, and Opportunities ever so fair, they will come no farther; so that they fell at Variance one with another, one crying you are not come far enough; the others making answer, you are gone too far: so that the Contention rose so high, that at length they hated one another as bad (nay some worse) than those they fled from.

However, their ill gotten Interest began to decline by the light of the Gospel, which was a Thing they always fear'd, tho' all their Art could no ways help it. Their most hated Enemy now prevailing, and like to get the upper hand, they then repaired to their old Refuge, which was Hypocrisy, and false glossing upon it (since they could not get shut of it) in Hopes to make this little Flock come into their Party, and take up Arms against their King, Christ Jesus; but all to no Purpose, for those of them that loved him least, loved him better than so to betray him.

Wherefore, when all Hopes of reclaiming that little Flock (to their Interest) failed them, they never failed persecuting them, that always proving their best Engine, and having no other Way to possess the Inheritance of Christ, but this making Use of his Name, tho' they esteem'd him no more than they formerly did their dead Idols, only altering their Names to promote their Interest.

For the dead Idols, having no means how to help their Interest, of themselves, those that affected them must do it for them, by the Power of the Sword, and other

other Warlike Engines, or otherwise it must go down; but Christ Jesus was the living God himself, who wanted no such Assistance, neither would allow any such Methods to be taken to support his Interest, for his Conquest was by suffering, which gain'd always more Ground in true Religion, than all the Swords that ever were drawn could do.

And really it is too much to be fear'd, that whosoever either offers Offence or Defence in the Name of Christ, makes but small Account of his God-Head, which is Omnipotent; for if it be thro' Zeal, it is really without Knowledge, but if any People will go to War in Pretence either to enlarge or defend his Interest, and yet own him to be the Living and Allpowerful God, must needs have some sinister End in view: as it has always been seen, that whosoever fought with the carnal World to enlarge Christ's Kingdom, if they conquered, they always took the whole Revenue to themselves, and Christ was never a whit the better for it; for Hypocrisy is no Christianity, but the contrary: for whosoever are forced into a Religion, or any Part of it against their wills, are only made many fold more Hypocrites, hateful to God, and dangerous to their Neighbour; wherefore whosoever forced them so were no Friends to Christ, let them pretend what they would.

For those that pretended to fight for it were always themselves the forest against it, they being of those who by making Use of his Name were his only Enemies as shall be shown (God willing) but whether of Ignorance, or not, I am no Mans Judge; however such martial Part taking with him he never required, nor never would allow, and former Experience plainly shows us, that it is altogether needless.

For under the Law, when they were to fight for a worldly Kingdom, whilst his People depended upon him, even if the Multitude of their Enemies was ever so great, and they ever so few, those great Mul-

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titudes were always destroyed before them ; so that his People had nothing to do, but make the Motion as if they had been fighting, and take up the Plunder of their conquered Enemies.

Wherefore it is wonderful, that any People should think that he is not so able to help in his own Cause now, as he was then ; except they absurdly think, that he is debilitated thro' Age, or that he lies under a state of Death, as the *Jews* laid him ; and if either of which be their Belief, or any such Thing, they had as good not believe in him at all ; and if they believe that he is the true and omnipotent God, it is but lost Labour to employ the feeble Arm of Flesh to fight for him.

But fighting was never an Ordinance of God at all, but to show the savage Nature of his Enemies he permitted them to destroy one another by that unlawful Means ; for had they lov'd God, they would have lov'd one another, but as they hated God, and could by no means come at him to hurt him, they wrecked out their Hatred one upon another.

C H A P. II.

BUT their crafty Enterprises that Way being defeated so that their Hands could not find the Way to effect them, their next Care was to work their Wits another Way, and that by new-invented Wiles to ensnare such as, by Force, they could not compel ; and that was, by misconstruing the true and real Ordinances of Christ, and casting of them quite away, and introducing other ones, and pretending to imitate Christ in them ; and that took better to their Purpose than all their former Inventions ; for that, in some Measure, intoxicated the whole Body for some Time.

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For the Ordinances of Christ, otherwise called the Fruits of the Spirit, are *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Patience, Forbearance, &c.* with all the rest, ordering them *to be wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves*; and to humble themselves, so as to do all good Offices to one another, suppose it were even to wash one another's Feet, without Question of Degrees or Stations in this World; he himself also giving them an Example; and also a Command along with it, *that as he did by them, so should they do by one another*, which was all the bodily Exercise that ever he enjoyn'd them, besides preaching and teaching; the Apostle gives a Reason for it, because *bodily Exercise profits little*, and therefore no Strefs to be laid upon it.

But instead of these holy Ordinances, there must be imitable ones introduced, such as *Water-Baptism, the Supper of the Lord, Matrimony, Pennance, Abstinence, Unction*, and the Lord knows what; but they were very careful that they would introduce nothing to Christ's Dishonour, that did not make something for their own Profit, for what they could not make Money of, less or more, must not be regarded; all Trades must live, and they could not afford to abuse the Gospel for nothing, for if they had not a good Portion in this Life, they expected none in the Life to come.

But where Truth is to be abused, Reason must be quite laid aside; for where there are three Baptisms, and but one to be continued, it is but reasonable that they should continue the most absolutely necessary; now the first was that of *Water*, and only instituted by *John* as a Preparative for the third, to let us see that a Baptism, or an Initiation, was absolutely necessary; but he having no Power to dispense the Spirit, that not being his Commission, therefore he officiated with the Element of *Water*; but he tells you he was to decrease and so he did in his Time, and so must

Water

Water too in Time, for it is of no eternal Subistence, and therefore not absolutely necessary, but only occasionally for that Time. The second is that of *Death* and *Suffering*, *Mark* x. 38, 39. and *Luke* xii. 50. which is only absolutely necessary if called to. But the third is that of the *Spirit*, and is absolutely necessary, and therefore to be continued, since there is but one *Lord*, one *Faith*, and one *Baptism*.

As to the first, they had as many *Lords* as ever the heathen *Gentiles* had, and made themselves as great, exercising Dominion over the Son's Inheritance; for those that had cast him out, and kill'd him, were destroyed according to their own Judgment, and these took Possession; but the true Heir, and Lord of Life, was by them allow'd no Share, nor Part in it.

Now, Reader, you see plainly how they have abused that first Article of *one Lord*. Now, is to be consider'd the second, which is *one Faith*, and that one Faith is Faith in Jesus Christ, which they have also cast off, to his great Disgrace; for instead of fixing their Faith in him, they rather chose a Log of Wood for their Saviour, which is the Cross he suffer'd upon, which they Adore and Worship, more than they do the whole Trinity of Persons; and also his Mother, who was but a very Woman, as other Women, she must also be worship'd with divine Honour, far above Christ.

Nay, St. *Anthony's* Arm, as they call it, which was but the Pissel of a Stag, and *Thomas Becket's* old Shoo, had more Honour and Respect pay'd them, a thousand fold, than ever the Son of God had pay'd him by them; so that their Faith was no Faith, but false and fictitious, and forcing those that adher'd to them, implicitly to believe every Thing that they were pleased to impose upon them, and they must dearly pay them too, for that Abuse; for they must not want sufficiently wherewithall to sacrifice to their

Gods, which are their Bellies; so that the Faith of Jesus Christ, was turned by them into Faith in their own Bellies; for find them but Money enough, and go not about to undermine their Interest, and do else whatsoever you please.

So that it is but Money enough, and you may do the worst Actions that ever the Devil can direct, and there shall be no Law, divine nor human, to correct it; wherefore, Reader, consider seriously with thyself what sort of Faith this is, or whether there be any such Thing to be found in the Truth, or what Reason can any ways agree to it. Now, Reader, take a serious View of all their Ways and Actions, this not being the hundredth Part of them, and see, whether, in thy Opinion, (be of what Opinion soever) they are not altogether diabolical.

The third Article being *Baptism*, of which there is but one also, and that one being the Initiation into the Holy Trinity, equally by their Distinctions, without any mention of Water, *Matt. xxviii. 19.* yet the Baptism of the Spirit was not like to bring in so much Money, as that of Water, tho' we do not hear that *John* ever made one Penny of it, neither have we any Reason to believe he did, by his austere Way of Living, tho', doubtless, these Men think him a Fool for his Pains.

However, simply dipping or sprinkling with Water to a tender Conscience, had been little to be cavill'd at, whether or not, had they not hedged it in with so many dangerous and superstitious Ceremonies; but Men must do something for their Money, else how could they expect it; for, besides all their other nonsensical Fooleries to amuse the deluded People withall, which we leave them to Act over again, except it please God of his Mercy to reclaim them, they must add dangerous Vows, and impose them upon People, even such as were simply impossible to be kept, or performed by such as were nearly concern'd,
much

much less possible for Strangers ; but on pretence of making one poor Innocent a Christian, they must perjure three or four ; and because Christ admonish'd Men, that if they made a Vow, not to defer to pay it, but if they did not vow they did not Sin ; therefore these Enemies of Christ took that Opportunity to load the People with such Vows as were altogether impossible to be kept, by which Means they should unavoidably sin, and that even at the Celebration of what they persuaded the People is a solemn holy Sacrament ; for which Offence they were sure Christ, if he were the Son of God, which they did not believe, would cast them off ; for in all Nations, Perjury is held to be farthest from Felicity.

If this be not Malice and Hatred of Christ, so to contradict him in his Laws and Ordinances, and setting up their own in contempt of him, and causing them to be obey'd too, I cannot tell what ought to be called Hatred or Malice. Whosoever walks not according to the Scripture, in religious Performances, may really be said not to believe it, for if they believ'd it, they would walk in Obedience to it. For to what purpose is it to pretend to worship God, contrary to his Will ? Or what greater or dangerouſer Iniquity can be committed than Perjury ? Or what more detestable ? and yet how readily and willingly do People act it in this Kind, even that they never intend nor mind no more, nor yet have the least Opportunity to do. It is a hard Case that they can find no other Way to give one to Christ, without the Danger of the Devil's getting four for it. But they say they had that Custom from the Christening of *heathen* Children, which makes my Assertion good ; for if they did not acknowledge themselves to be *Heathens* still, why should any one vow to see their Children brought up *Christians* ? It appears by this, that the Vertue of the Sprinkling wears off before that those have Children of their own, and they becoming *Heathens*

thens again, their Children must be done by as *Heathens*; wherefore, they need no other Witness to prove them *Heathens* still, as I have inserted, only their Names changed for Advantage.

Pray what Vows or Injunctions did *John the Baptist* lay upon such as he baptized? Such Vows and Oaths are as impossible to be kept as the Ceremonies of the Law were; and since Christ came to free us from that impossible Bondage, it is very grievous that we should esteem so little of such an unspeakable Benefit, as not to accept it; but tho' we do not, with the *Jews*, continue the old Ceremonies, yet we have framed to ourselves others as hard to be performed, and more dangerous to be broken; so that we have quite contemned the Benefits of Christ against ourselves, by those unwarrantable Injunctions.

It is very strange that the brute Beasts, by the instinct of Nature, know how to do by their Young, and Man that has Reason, the Image of God, stampt upon him, with the Truth also to direct him, cannot come up to that Perfection of a Brute, without being bound up with Vows, tho' less performed by many, than even by the brute Beasts. What an unreasonable Thing is it that Men should forfeit their Reason to that Degree, and esteem themselves less, even in natural Reason, than the Beasts that perish?

But it is to be lamented that many there be which will hear no Reason, nor yet understand the Truth, and therefore there is nothing to be done with them, but leave them where we found them.

But others there be which will bless God that ever they see this small Warning, and therefore will receive it accordingly, which, when receiv'd, will deliver them from many Troubles in this Life, and Dangers of Destruction in the Life to come. For however God may be pleased to extend his uncovenanted Mercy, which we have no Proof of, yet we are not to run on in Sin to the highest Degree upon such vain Hopes.

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Articling in all Cases would answer the same End, and deliver the World from a Multitude of Sin.

Besides, what Children are worse taken Care of than such who have so many sworn to take Care of them? But that is the Curse that attends broken Vows, for God will not clear the Guilty; but I am sorry that some, who in many Things have so fairly escaped so many Dangers, from those deadly Enemies of Christ, should yet stick so fast in such dangerous Mud; for those who give the Charge to the Parent only, tho' he be but one, yet he must be a deep Partaker of that Guilt; for neither is he capable to keep such a heavy Charge as he ought, neither when the Charge is laid upon the Child come to Age, is the Child itself capable to keep such a Vow as it ought, altho' it be their Duty, without a Vow, to do it.

Wherefore, our Saviour foreseeing those Disconveniences, gives his Advice not to swear at all, by any manner of Oath, and then there can be no Sin in the Breach of a Vow that was never made. He tells his Disciples also, after his Resurrection, that *John* indeed *baptized them with Water*, but they should be *baptized with the Holy Ghost not many Days hence*; and since there is but one Baptism, that must certainly be it, if we regard the Truth.

But that Baptism in their own Blood, wherewith Christ and his Apostles were all baptized, they have laid quite aside, for that brings Pain without Profit, which is no ways agreeable to their Constitution; but, say they, we had our Time of that before we had Power to resist. But, I answer, it was not you that now have the Power to resist, that suffer'd at that Time; remember Bishop *Boner*, and Bishop *Gardiner*, and their Accomplices, who always turned as the Times turned, and caused many to suffer, but would suffer nothing themselves for any Religion, nor be baptized at all, with that Baptism wherewith they so liberally baptized others.

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But these mistaken Ordinances, of which this Water-Baptism is the first, must be called *Sacraments*; a Word that Christ, or his Apostles, never knew, nor never was any where to be found, but in the Priest's Invention; for the Word, in plain *English*, is *privately* or *secretly*; and it is said the Disciples assembled secretly on the first Day of the Week, for fear of the *Jews*, but it is not said that they dipt any one in those secret Assemblies, and if they had, yet what Occasion have they to retain that Name to it now, when it is so publick, that it is even dangerous to omit it.

But the Name being no where to be found in the Truth, the Action must be agreeable; for as it does not belong to the Truth, it must be usher'd in with a Lie; for when they have sprinkled the Infant, then they repeat its Name, and say, *I Baptize thee*, when as it is no such Thing; for baptizing is dipping. Why cannot they as well say, *I Rantize thee*? and that would be the Truth, because it really is so; for since Christ was pleased to term Liers the Devil's Children, and positively to forbid both Vows and Oaths upon any Occasion, it is very unlikely that he would also accept them to be continued in his Church, or to make up holy Ordinances, and it is to no Purpose to Maintain any Thing that we are sure will not be accepted.

The next holy Ordinance is the *Lord's Supper*, which really is such, and also is an incumbent Duty on all Christians to imitate it, as it was directed; but as it is made use of since the great Adversary took it in Hand, I leave it to all judicious Readers to judge, for I cannot see that their Way of using of it now, bears any Resemblance to that which Christ ordain'd; however People are blindly deluded.

For in the *first* Place, it was Christ in the Flesh, his last Supper. *Secondly*, It was at the eating of the *Passover*, which was a plentiful Meal, whereof they
were

were to eat heartily and leave none, and if they did it was to be burned the next Morning. *Thirdly*, It was eaten in a large upper Chamber. *Fourthly*, It was with twelve chosen Men, and one of them a Devil, without any Women amongst them. *Fifthly*, It was late in the Evening. *Sixthly*, It was the eternal Son of God incarnate, that was both present and distributed the Ordinance with his own Hands, who after the Ordinance was over; took a Towel and girded himself, and washed his Disciples Feet, commanding them to do the like by one another; also the Exhibiter of this Ordinance was to be, and also was, condemned, and crucified the Day following.

Now in answer to the *first*, Christ is not now in the Flesh, nor no more to be; and as to the *second*, it was at the eating of the *Passover* which was done away with the rest of the legal Ceremonies, and was a plentiful Meal, and serv'd for a common Meal, which now is converted into a little Morsel, not half a Mouthful, and that but once in a Month, or much less, or may be never, or how each one pleases; and at the most, if their Souls be not better fed with it than their Bodies, they would live but a short while upon such Kind of Feeding: And as to the *third*, it was then a large upper Chamber, but the whole House is little enough now, and thro' continuance of Time is become vastly large, and the upper Chamber is so sunk, till it is become even with the Ground.

Also, instead of eleven Saints, and one Devil, it is well if there be one Saint to eleven Devils, considering the broken Vows they are guilty of in their baptizing, and marrying, if there was nothing else; as shall be shown. Besides, here are Women as well as Men, which were not there; it was also late in the Evening, and serv'd for Supper, now, it is generally about Noon, but no ways satisfies for a Dinner. In the *sixth* Place, it was the eternal Son of God that was the Exhibiter, but what intolerable Presumption is it

in any mere Man, that is a Sinner by Nature, to personate, or pretend to imitate, the pure and spotless Lamb of God, except he had had a Command for it from his own Mouth, and also the divine Spirit to assist him, and that in some miraculous and humble Manner, that it may be evident to all, that he has a Commission so to do; but as for the washing of one another's Feet, altho' they were commanded to do it (and doubtless did in all good and humble Offices to the Household of Faith) yet our Profit-Mongers, now-a-days, lays it wholly aside; it is too mean, too painful, and too little Money for it; for those that had nothing to give would require the most Pains, but for these which they hold up for imitable Ordinances, for those that cannot pay, there is but little Pains, and that both clean and genteel; and those that are any ways able, must pay them to the full Extent by force.

But all this, tho' most erroneous, is in Comparison nothing to what was further invented to degrade the Lord of Life, even in this same pretended Ordinance; for, *first*, they pretend to create, or make him, who himself *made all Things of nothing*; than which there cannot be greater Blasphemy, and when he is made, they must eat him, which is manifold Degrees worse than the Cannibals; for they will not eat one another, much less their God if they own any; but these Mock-Christians must eat him, and so frustrate the Promise of God, which was *that his holy One should not see Corruption*; but they who hated the Father no less than the Son, resolv'd they would make him a Lier, for they would show as many as would believe them, that they would reduce his holy One to see Corruption at their own Pleasure, and that in their own corrupt Paunches, where they were sure they could not be circumvented.

Well now he is eaten, and also turned to Corruption, and what then? why then he could not remain there, as others might do in their corrupt Graves; no, these

these Miscreants must make a little more Game of him, for he must be voided out again, upon some filthy Dunghil, or in some stinking Vault. O abominable to Humanity! what sincere Christian can reflect upon such, more than diabolical Actions, but with the greatest Abhorrence and Heart-Melting, to see their dearest Lord's Memory thus abused, and dare not find Fault, no not for their Lives in many Places of the World, but especially where such inhuman Wretches have Power? If it be of Love, or Goodwill to him, that they do it, surely they will not take it ill if he should treat them with such like Quarters to all Eternity; for it cannot be supposed that he will love them worse than they did him, because it is impossible, except with Almighty Power; doubtless therefore, their Love shall be repay'd with such Love again comparatively.

But this is not all neither, for if they can but have any Suspicion of any one that loves Christ any better than to serve him so, then such must undergo all their hell-invented Persecutions, and except they will freely deny the Lord that bought them, and frankly comply with all those Disgraces, and even joyn Hands in degrading of him themselves, they must no less than suffer the most cruel Death, that ever either Earth or Hell invented, which is burning alive in a publick Assembly. But no Christian can be a Persecutor; it is impossible.

But they say, that he told his Apostles, that it was *his Body which he gave them*, he told them also, that it was *Bread and Wine which he gave them*, and their own Senses and Reason show'd them, that it was Bread and Wine, that were broken and shed by him, which he also gave to them, for as for his natural Body then present, it was whole and sound, and also in a good State of Health; but as it is impossible to hate Reason, and love the Truth, therefore they must wholly abandon the first Person in the blessed Trinity, which

is *Reason*, that they may the more tolerably Abuse the second, which is *Truth*, and quite deny all the Operations of the third Person in themselves, which is the *Holy Spirit*.

And tho' he called it his Body, it was neither Error nor Mistake in him, altho' it was not his natural Body; for as he himself created all Things of no Substance, but himself, then all Bodies may very reasonably be called his Body, because they are wholly of him; and Wine may be compared to his Blood, because it is really of him, and resembles Blood, and Water also may be compared to Spirits, or Juice, as it is to be found in a natural Body; but these God-Eaters will have it their Way, because it is the Master-Piece of their Invention, whereby they can degrade and abuse the whole Trinity of Persons at once.

But why do not those who pretend to personate him, dispensing of Bread and Wine, which he never commission'd any to do, personate him also in washing of one another's Feet, and in all his Sufferings and Crucifixion upon the Day following, and also to rise again the third Day, and then we will believe that they have a Commission for the other also; but they only follow him for the Loaves and Fishes, but desert him in his Sufferings; but all that I can do for them is to abhor their Malice, lament their Ignorance, and show them the Truth.

For Christ, who loved his own, loved them to the End, and he gave them a Token to know themselves by, whether they were his Disciples or no, and that was by *loving one another*; besides, he told them that if they did not love him *above all other Relations*, tho' ever so near; *they were not worthy of him*; for which he gave them this Rule for their Remembrance, *that as often as they eat Bread, and drink of any manner of Liquid*, they should do it in Remembrance of him, which is generally three Times in a Day, or
more,

more, and by that Means he would be but very little out of their Thoughts; for if their Bodies, that are but of a temporal Being, have need to be supported so often, with the Elements of temporal Food; much more the Soul, that is of an eternal Continuance, has need to be fed with the Food of Life which came down from Heaven, upon the Strength of which it must ascend thither, or not at all.

And the Apostle seems well to support that Assertion, when he says, *whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the Glory of God*; but this monthly Ordinance turns that quite out; for contrary to that, how much Vanity, or Profaneness, frothy Discords, no Thoughts of Christ, or Piety at all, is to be seen at most of our ordinary Eatings and Drinkings, which is a Shame to see, and a Grief to any well disposed Christian to consider; for if *Eating and Drinking unworthily, be Eating and Drinking Damnation, not discerning the Lord's Body*, then faithfully discerning the Lord's Body, when we eat and drink, is the Duty required of a worthy Christian; which is an easy Task required of us, in order to our Acceptance; for it is not reasonable, that whilst we are even over-charging of Nature, sometimes with Eating and Drinking, that oftentimes costs us sore Labour the acquiring, and in the mean while to starve our Souls, or suffer them to want what is so easy to be had, even *without Money, or without Price*, is unreasonable indeed. Feasts of Love, where Conversation is held for building one another up in their most holy Faith, are very convenient, and no less than a Christian's Duty, because practised by the Apostles, and Primitive Christians; but as it is practised now in the Name of an Ordinance, how like to the former, I leave to any judicious Reader to judge.

The next Thing to be consider'd is *Marriage*; and that must be done with a great many solemn Vows too, which are very little sooner made than broken,

then the Curse of God upon broken Vows attends that unhappy Marriage which makes so many of them unhappy, so that one in a thousand answers not the End for which they were intended. For a Man, besides all his other Vows, to vow, and swear to endow his Wife with all his worldly Goods, it is a hard Task, considering many Men's Extravagances, and all other Disconveniences, which might be a Lett to him in case he really design'd it: But then when he comes to die, if he leaves any Thing in his Will to his Children, or any Friend, then must he go to the Grave with the Curse of a broken Vow upon him, which all Men will allow to be a Sin, and also a Sin unrepented of, because he alter'd not his Will, and left all to his Wife before he died. He vows also to *Love and Cherish her*, when perhaps it is contrary both to Nature and Reason, she proving herself to be in all respects rather an Object of his Hatred. And she vows to *Honour and Obey him*, when perhaps she designed the contrary when she made the Vow; and so comes under the Curse of a broken Vow by making it. What a wretched Contradiction here is in the same Words, wherein he vows all his worldly Goods to his Wife, binds whatsoever was hers before to him, to be at his Disposall, and if he should sell all she has the next Day, and make his own Use of it, without endowing her with one Penny-worth of it, there is no Law to contradict it, or yet to punish him for his Perjury. O what a wretched Condition is such a World in, and yet must be called Christian, when *Heathens* would abhor such perjur'd Doings; and the World is drawn into this Snare by learned Leaders, which have also got this horrid Iniquity *established by a Law*, both *pro* and *con*.

As for any Things which they call *Sacraments*, if they would not call them Ordinances, which is a Lie, and impose them upon other People, which is a great Wickedness, for that destroys Christian Liberty, which

which all Men ought to enjoy, and no Man has any Right to deprive another of, for it is a Thing so desirable, that no Man would be willing to be deprived of it himself, therefore Reason it is, and the Truth also attests it, that every Man should *do as he would be done by*; otherwise it is Tyranny and Oppression: I say, that every one might use his own Discretion, as to his own Part, so he offend not his Neighbour with them, for *wo to him by whom Offence cometh*.

Also all publick Offices must be enter'd upon with Oaths, and solemn Vows, which only makes such Officers much more remiss, than if there were no such Thing impos'd upon them; for it is simply impossible for Flesh and Blood to keep them as they ought. It is too much if they have the Sin itself to answer for; and not to have the guilt of Perjury always attending every Trespas, which it may be is a thousand Times less Sin in itself; but as there is no enjoying a good Convenience without a bad attending it, it verifies the old Proverb, *Sell thy Soul, and buy a Commission*, for rather than want it, many regards not what they swear, for they are not the more punished for their Fault that they are perjured also. Wherefore whosoever would keep a good Conscience, as in the Presence of God, is not at all qualified for any Office, or Place, or Post under the Government; which is very lamentable; for rather who so would swallow such Oaths, ought to be counted unworthy of it.

Wherefore when they find they cannot keep them, then they, for the most Part, grow harden'd, and finding an impossibility to be true to their God, and keep their Place, they care not how unjust they be to Men. It is but all one Fault, they say, and so go on in their Fraud and Deceit, which probably they would not have done, but for those pernicious Oaths and Engagements, which are cursed for want of keeping; and it plainly appears to me that such Things are not of God, for they have no Countenance of those two
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great Witnesses, *Truth* and *Reason*, but are usher'd in by that destroying Spirit of Antichrist, to intoxicate, if it were possible, the *very Elect*: For it makes the Serious, bad, and the Indifferent, a thousand Times worse than otherwise they would be.

Wherefore the Advice of divine Truth is best, *not to swear at all*, and that prevents that dangerous and damnable Sin of Perjury; and also to make no Vows, for that is a Debt contracted to God, and must be pay'd, or Sin lies at the Door, for if they had not vow'd they had not sin'd. A Vow, and an Oath, are all the same, by their own Confession. Now it is said, *If any Man Sin he hath an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the Righteous*; but it was not said to such as willingly and wilfully go on in their Trespases, but to such as penitently repent and forsake their Sins; but we never hear of one that repents of that kind of Perjury. We are taught, in the sixth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, to pray that God would *not lead us into Temptation*, which is altogether just and contrary to his pure Nature; but it is an excellent Caution for us not to lead one another into that Disconvenience that we ourselves would desire to be deliver'd from.

But all those none-such Injuries to the eternal Son of God, or rather to the blessed Trinity, are not all, for there must be Pardons, Indulgences, Supererogation, baptizing of Bells, and more than any Man can express, to wrest the Kingdom out of the Hand of the Son and Heir; but all they can do is only to show their Malice, for as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, and as there is no knowing of the one, but by the Revelation of the other, and both are reveal'd to us by the Holy Spirit; their true Image upon the Earth being *Reason* and *Truth*, these two great Witnesses mention'd in *Rev. xi.* who, notwithstanding their great Power to destroy their Adversaries, were, and are so cruelly treated here upon Earth;
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and tho' they have been killed to Appearance, and laid as it were dead for a Time, the Enemies even triumphing and rejoycing over their dead Bodies ; their raging Malice against them not suffering their Bodies to be buried ; yet to the Enemies great Terror they shall revive again, and be receiv'd up to their native Heaven, where their Enemy cannot come, but must remain to abide that Fire wherewith they two glorious Witnesses have Power to destroy their Adversary, or those that hurt them.

I mention'd before those who made a party Escape from that Apostacy, but not particularly ; wherefore least there should be any Misapprehension, I shall give a more particular Account, who, and what they be ; and first there were the *Greeks*, who only cast off the Pope's Supremacy ; and next there were the *Lutherans*, who cast off a great many of their useles Ceremonies, yet retain'd Images, tho' they Worship them not : Then the *Calvinists*, they threw away Images and the greatest Part of the superstitious Ceremonies ; however there are many Sorts of *Calvinists*, and some retaining more, some less of those Ceremonies ; which is sufficiently spoke of before. However, as is particularly shew'd, all of them retain'd something unwarrantable, and instead of going on to perfection, they rather declin'd again to defection.

But there being still a Thief in the House unperceiv'd, which was priestly Profit, that one Thief stole away the Life of Religion, and caused many both useles and dangerous Observations to be retain'd, that otherwise would have been cast off with the rest ; and whilst ever that Thief is in the House, it is of no purpose to shut the Door at all, for he quite robs People of their Christian Liberty, and makes them very Slaves to Lucre. For those that profit by preaching are so blinded, that they neither can nor dare see the Truths of the Gospel, for fear of bodily Loss ; and in order to support their Gain, they must not direct

rect the Scriptures in the Spirit's Language, as holy Men of Old were directed to write it; but they must put other Constructions and Meanings to it, and every one his own Meaning, which has rent Religion all to pieces. But there is also Policy in that, for it causes a great many more to be employ'd; for if the Scriptures were all directed one Way, or even as the Holy Ghost has directed them to us, the People would be all of one Opinion, and then one House would be enough for one Parish, and one or two Preachers in that House; but now every Sect must have one Preacher at least, and some two, or three, or more, all which must have settled Salaries to make amends for their College Expences; and every Party is so bigotted to their Opinion, by the Persuasion of their Preacher, that they have quite destroy'd that most excellent Grace of Charity; so that they believe one another to be no less than damned, because they differ in Opinion from each other; so that what of all Things ought to unite People together in Love, is made by those benefic'd Preachers the only Cause of Hatred; so that instead of Love, there is nothing but Malice, Strife, Envy, Backbiting, Undermining, Circumventing, nay sometimes even killing and murdering each other, worse than savage Beasts. And those learned Men, thro' a pretended Zeal, are the Cause of all, but whosoever hath not the *Spirit of Christ* is none of his; how unlike to Christ then are such Actions? Who would not suffer even Self-Defence in his Name, nor for his Sake? and since they are not Christ's for Want of his inoffensive Spirit, let them consider whose they be, lest for all their crying, *Lord, Lord*, they enter not the Kingdom of Heaven; for Schism is not a Departing of one Faction from another, as some vainly assert, but whosoever departs from the Purity of Christ's Spirit, as it is revealed in the Gospel, or otherwise, of which the Departed and Deserted may be both less or more guilty; as is too evident, however

ever each endeavours to clear themselves and condemn each other. And whatever Faction gets a Majority in Number in any Country, usurps a Dominion, and whatever other Factions inhabit amongst them, must be even robbed by a Law established, for his Master-ships Maintenance; which how unlike that is to the Golden Rule of Equity, let Reason itself be judge.

However as the Promoters of the Gospel at first were all Lay-Men, and very few Scholars amongst them, if any, and they walked by such Rules as the Spirit of God directed them, without any unreconcilable Difference amongst them, it certainly was the Design of the Almighty that it should continue so; for as soon as ever they began to annex human Learning as a necessary Qualification, the Gospel Interest began to decline; for human Learning was never of Christ's appointing, because he *thanks his heavenly Father for biding the Mysteries of the Gospel from the Wise and Prudent, and revealing them to those who were but Babes and Sucklings* in human Knowledge; besides many other Scriptures to the same Purpose.

Who also in these latter Days has raised up a Sett of Lay-Men, to whom he has been pleased to reveal his holy Will, and to bestow his Spirit upon them, who has clearly discovered that Master-Thief, and Murderer, who has such a gang of destructive Hell-Hounds always at his Heels. For worldly Gain by the Gospel, was never ordain'd by Christ, further than present Necessity required, which was a Bar against Pride, Ambition, and Vanity, and Oppression, and Wrong, in causing them to pay for their preaching, by force, who would rather they should hold their Peace: all which is so noxious to the Simplicity of Christ's Gospel, that it bears no Resemblance, but of the contrary.

However those Lay-Men have so bound up those Thieves, and by such special Rules and Tyes, that they will never appear more in Publick amongst them;

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for they having pluckt up Profit by preaching, so clean by the Roots, that all those other pernicious Attenders must needs fade of course; these Men walk at Liberty in the Light of the Lord, and the *Truth bath made them free*, and nothing shall annoy them, for *their Mind is fixed trusting in the Lord; whose whole Study is to do his Will, and walk in his Way*; and take Directions immediatly from his Spirit, by which only the Scriptures are to be understood, and not by any human Acquisition: For if that could find out the Mysteries of the Scriptures, there would be no Divisions about it amongst the Learned, because they seem as if they contended who should be most Proficient that Way, but they that depend upon the Spirit of God to reveal the Scripture to them, they are *taught of God*, and have no need of Man's teaching.

There is none can understand the *Psalms* of *David* by any human Acquisition; for he speaks so prophetically and parabolically of Christ, and himself, that without divine Assistance, no Man can tell at all Times, whether he speaks of himself or of Christ. I have heard one of those methodical Preachers, and one of great Reputation too, preach from that Text of the *Psalms*, where it is said, *and I kept my self from mine Iniquities*, Psalm xviii. 23. *how should that answer to Psalm xxv. 7. or Psalm xxxii. 5. with many other Places*; Reader take notice for thy own Satisfaction. Of which he made three Sermons, alluding all to *David* himself, which was utterly false, for *David's* Iniquities could not be his, before they were committed, either in Action or Resolution, and if they were committed in either, then he did not keep himself from them, which makes the very Words a Contradiction in themselves; but he spoke of Christ who took upon him our Iniquities, and then they were his by Imputation, yet kept himself pure and unspotted from them all; which is Truth, and sufficiently possible without the least Contradiction.

I have also taken Notice, that when the Enemies of the Gospel could by no Means get it extinguished, but rather by the divine Providenc of God, it grew, and prevail'd, and Printing coming in Fashion, then it was but Vanity to attempt its Extirpation any more, altho' they often did in vain. Then their Inventions must be upon the Anvil once more, and as they never wanted Antidotes against all former Diseases, they must have one also against this; and that was to invent Fictions, to divert People from reading of the Scriptures, to which all ingenious Heads must be at work; which Stratagem took to a vast Degree, and so filled the World so full of amazing Wonders, and fictitious Lies, that it has prov'd a very Infection, and rather encouraged, than any ways forbid the People to believe that they were all Truths, in some Mystry or other, and really intoxicated many that might have been better disposed, if better exercised.

But it is to be lamented that that Practice was not left to themselves; for the *Reformed*, tho' they did not take their Way in writing groundless Lies, yet they write every one his own Way, grounding all upon the Scriptures, which has prov'd to little better Purpose than the former, if not worse in some Respects; for every Profession writes according to his own Notions, and every one a sundry Way; so that without the real Assistance of the Spirit of God, no one knows what or whom to believe: he affirms his Way to be best, and he, his Way; and instead of either of them being best; there is none of them so good as they should be; and though they are all sensible of it, yet they are all so blinded by worldly Advantages, that they will rather run all Hazards, than part with any Thing of their beloved Mammon; however almost every one of them must write Books, more or less, to show to the deluded World the Strength of their Brains, their Ingenuity, and Industry, and College-Acquisitions, and to eternise their Name for holy Men;

when in the mean Time, most of them would hardly take less Wages to teach a better Profession, suppose they believ'd it to be so; which makes good the old Proverb, *Who so serves God for Money, would serve the Devil for more Wages*, which is very lamentable to consider; pray God amend it.

However these Books so far answers the End, that I in Charity hope they were not intended, that they hold People posing and poring upon something they do not know what, nor are never a Whit the better for, and dangerous to be believ'd; that the Book of Books, which is Truth, and all Men ought to believe, is so much neglected, that those that are even accounted pious Readers, scarce know what's in it, more than what they have pickt out of those mis-constructed Notions; however there are none of those pious Writers, but what would have their Books both read, and believed by all. But if People would take nothing else to do, it were impossible, although they never so much as look'd into the Word of God, to see whether *such Things were so or no*, as the noble Bereans did, but most people are so bigotted upon the Verity of their Preacher, that they will not believe the Scriptures before him. And when Variety of Professions meets, they agree well enough, while they are discoursing about the Devil, or his Works, and Ways; but whenever they fall on about Religion, then they fall all to odds, and begin to jeer and reproach one another, and even to hate and persecute one another to the utmost of their Power, and so turn their Backs altogether upon Christ; for a Persecutor cannot be a Christian, and if they call themselves Christians, they are Liers, or otherwise they mean something else by that Name; for Christ the Son of God would allow of none; he would rather wander in the Night, than any ways persecute those that refus'd him Lodging; and severely rebuked his Apostles for such a Motion, and all that love him likewise abhor it, because it is so
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contrary to all Reason ; for no one would willingly be served so ; wherefore it is Height of all Tyranny and Cruelty, and ought to be abhorred even of human Authority, much more of that called Christian. Here is also a great a-do about the interpreting of the antient Fathers, which only as private Men show their Opinions, and the then Customs of the Church, and some of them quite differing from each other. Therefore what is that to us, since we have a *surer Word of Prophecy, to which we do well, if we give heed,* and they would have done well if they had never writ, since the Scriptures, which no Man dare deny, were pen'd by the Operation of the Spirit of God, are sufficient for our Instruction : and suppose no one has any such Opinion of those they call antient Fathers ; and also endless Amusements, and no needful Intelligence is to be found in them, because they are not to be depended upon ; besides, what were they more than other well inclin'd Men ? and all such may as well be termed antient Fathers as they ; only some of them designed well by their Writings, but being too prolix, they became unprofitable Amusements ; which has done a great deal of hurt, but little or no good ? The Scriptures of Truth being sufficient for all Ages. For if all good Mens Writings (at least those that are esteemed so) were called in for Witness to Truth, there would be so many Truths, that it would be impossible to know what is Truth ; for every Sect would have a Truth of their own, and then there would be as many Truths as Reasons, and both would become mere Fictions. I have not pretended to show all the Mistakes and Abuses in Religion ; because I never knew the Half of them ; but whatsoever unprejudiced Reader comprehends seriously what is here inserted, it will gradually lead him into the Knowledge of all the rest, and also to distinguish sound Reason and Truth, at all Times, and in all Cases.

Now,

Now, Reader, here I have shown thee my Talent, and how in this Measure I have improved it; and if it does not please thee, blame not me, for I lay under a Necessity, in a great Measure, to do what I have done; and if thou see'st any Thing here that thou canst not agree to, thou must apply thy self to the same Rule in reading, as I did in writing, with the Direction of the two great Witnesses *Reason* and *Truth*, with singleness of Heart, and without Prejudice, and then thou needst not to fear a right Information; to which I leave thee, and the God of Peace give thee Understanding in all Things. *Amen.*

Friendly Reader,

I Would not have thee Labour under any Mistake concerning what is here recommended to thee, for I have no Intention to recommend any Thing to the World, that is either new, or doubtful; but what in Charity I hope a great Part of Christians is labouring after, which is the Knowledge of the Truth, or what is absolutely necessary to be known. As for the first Part of my Book, it is not for any Thing in it so necessary to Salvation, as to show the Nature of the two great Witnesses, so long in the World, and misunderstood; for whatsoever be the Case in Question, except divine Reason, and the express Word of Truth agree, it is not at all to be depended upon; and by their Concurrence, there is no Question so difficult, but what may be discussed without Danger of Mistake. I do not say but they may be both abused by Sophistication; and what is quite contrary to Reason, may find some Gloss of a seeming Truth; but that is not at all my Meaning, and whosoever thinks so, abuses both themselves and me. And as for the second Part it is only to show the dangerous Errors that are generally upheld, and to set them forth in such dangerous and dark Colours, as they justly deserve, so that thou mayest be undeceiv'd: For, as for my Part, I expect nothing to myself but Ill-will, which I need not for my own Part, because I am grounded in those Things before; but it is in Obedience to a Call I had to it, and my natural Good-will to my Fellow-Creatures; and if thou wilt abuse, or if thou wilt refuse, it is equal to me. I have discharged my Duty, as far as God by his Holy Spirit has been pleased to direct, and if thou framest any Thing to thyself, and miscarriest in it, do not blame me, but thyself, for that great Recorder, Conscience will be an impartial Witness at last for us both.

F N I I S.

